GUIDE TO THE AF16 SOUTHWEST CHINA FILE

[The AF16 Southwest China File contains specific data on the regional culture of the southwestern Chinese provinces of Yunnan, Kweichow, Szechuan and Sikang (Sikang was officially incorporated into Szechuan Province in July 1955). Southwest China was the last region to come under the power of the Chinese Communist government. It is a large area geographically (Yunnan is the second largest province in China), and contains as high a cultural diversity as to be found anywhere in China. There were a large number of tribal groups and small kingdoms speaking different languages which interacted with Chinese culture over a long period of time. The center of Chinese culture in the area was Chengtu, the capital of Szechuan. Among the many ethnic groups in the area which are discussed in the sources in the file are Minchia, Na-khi (Moso) and Pai-i.

There are seven sources in the AF16 Southwest China file, all of them in English. The basic source is 1: Stanford University. This is a general social, economic and political survey of this region, concentrating on the period 1949-1955, i.e., after the Chinese Communist takeover. It also contains historical data and information on the peoples and cultures of the region prior to 1949. 2: Rock is a very detailed historical and geographical analysis of a region in Yunnan, containing also genealogies, information on trails and routes, and on the flora of the area. 3: Hutson is a study of the city of Kwan Hsien in Szechuan, emphasizing religion, but also giving a general ethnographic coverage of the Chinese inhabitants. 4: Hsu describes the reaction to a cholera epidemic in a small town in Yunnan and how traditional and modern methods of treatment intermeshed. 5: Davies is a general survey of

Yunnan by a British officer who was interested in railroad routes. It contains a good bit of fragmentary information on a number of the tribes living in this province. 6: Liao is a study of the origins and current status of a Chinese secret society in Szechuan. 7: Hu is an agricultural and forestry land use survey of the Szechuan basin. Aside from the general survey in 1: Stanford University, most of the information in the file is based on fieldwork done during the 1930's and 1940's. The exception is 5: Davies, based on travels in the period 1894-1900. This is a fairly good regional file and can be used for many cross-national or large-area comparisons. The data on the groups living in the area are quite scattered however, and the researcher should be cautious in using them. The file was processed in 1955 and 1956.]